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Message Text

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PAGE 01 BRUSSE 09614 081559Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------034370 081600Z /44
O 081600Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1287

S E C R E T BRUSSELS 09614

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: NATO, NPG, BE
SUBJECT: ALLIED ATTITUDES ON NEUTRON BOMB

REF: STATE 184569

1. THE INITIAL BELGIAN REACTION TO THE NEUTRON BOMB, INCLUDING BOTH THAT OF THE GOVERNMENT AND OF PUBLIC OPINION, IS AS PROVIDED IN BRUSSELS 9277 (DTG 031909Z AUG 77). OUR FURTHER COMMENTS BELOW SUPPLEMENT THAT INITIAL REPORT.

2. BELGIAN GOVERNMENT HAS SEVERAL LEVELS OF INTEREST IN THE NEUTROM BOMB. ITMUST BE ABLE TO ANSWER MEDIA AND PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS. ITMUST BE ABLE TO FORM AN OPINION ON BOTH POLITICAL AND MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE WEAPON ITSELF AND ON THE POSSIBLE DEPLOYMENT OF THE WEAPON. IT WILL HAVE TO ARRIVE AT DECISIONS ON WHETHER THE NEUTRON BOMB HAS A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON MBFR, SALTAND CSCE. LASTLY, THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT WILL EXPECT SUCH QUESTIONS TO BE DISCUSSED FULLY AT NATO IN AN APPROPRIATE FORUM.

3. IN VIEW OF THE ABOVE, WE CONSIDER IT ESSENTIAL THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT CONSULT CLOSELY WITH THEBELGIAN GOVERNMENT PRIOR TO ARRIVING AT ANY FIRM DECISIONS ON WHETHER OR NOTTO PROCEED WITH
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THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENTAND EUROPEAN DEPLOYMENT OF THE NEUTRON BOMB.

4. AS TO THE FORUM FOR SUCH CONSULTATION, WE BELIEVE THAT THE CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN ATNATO (USNATO 7302; DTG 281619Z JUL 77) SHOULD BE PURSUED. WE SEE SIGNIFICANT ADVANTAGES TO HAVING FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ATNATO, RATHER THAN BILATERALLY,

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AS THAT ISAN ASSURANCE THAT THE BELGIANS WILL BE CONVINCED
THAT THEY ARE RECEIVING EXACTLY THE SAME INFORMATION PROVIDED
TO OTHER NATO ALLIES. FURTHERMORE, THE NECESSARY EXPERTISE
TO ADDRESS ALL ASPECTS OF THE ISSUE OFBOTH A MILITARY AND
POLITICAL NATURE EXISTS AT NATO.

5. OUR CONSIDERED OPINION IS THAT THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT AS A WHOLE
WILL LOOK UPON THE NEUTRON BOMB AS SIMPLY ANOTHER WEAPONS SYSTEM.
BELGIAN PUBLIC OPINION WILL PROBABLY ALSO ACCEPT THIS VIEWPOINT.
THE FORM OF CONSULTATIONS WILL, HOWEVER, BE VERY IMPORTANT TO
THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT AND MAY DETERMINE IN LARGE PART ON HOW
VOCAL ITWILL BE IN SUPPORT OF WHATEVER DECISIONS THE U.S.
GOVERNMENT REACHES. THE SOONER WE CONSULT WITH THE BELGIAN
GOVERNMENT, THE BETTER IT WILL BE. CHAMBERS

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